University of Nevada, Reno

Understanding Paris Dada: Translating the Nonsense of Anti-Art

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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by

Brooke Lynn Mikkelsen

Louis W. Marvick, Ph. D., Thesis Advisor

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Abstract

The Dada movement, an art and literature movement started during World War I as a rejection of societal and artistic conventions, is left out of American education despite its widespread influence on the art world and the meaning of "art" itself. Part of this ignorance can be attributed to the relative lack of translation of the Parisian works. Efforts to translate Zurich and Berlin Dada have been recently undertaken, but works from Paris have largely been ignored due to the movement being seen as merely a stepping stone on the way to Surrealism. In this paper, a specific plan of translation tailored to the Parisian Dada poetry is presented and evaluated on poems by Soupault and Éluard. With the enigma of Dada poetry cracked, more translators may approach Dada, leading to more translated poems and thus English-speaking audiences could understand the importance of Paris Dada and its lasting impact on modern art and literature movements.

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Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Translation of Paris Dada

The abstract of the present study bears repeating here, inasmuch as it gives a context and statement of intent for the detailed discussion that follows. The Dada movement, an art and literature movement started during World War I as a rejection of societal and artistic conventions, is left out of American education despite its widespread influence on the art world and the meaning of "art" itself. Part of this ignorance can be attributed to the relative lack of translation of the Parisian works. Efforts to translate Zurich and Berlin Dada have been recently undertaken, but works from Paris have largely been ignored due to the movement being seen as merely a stepping stone on the way to Surrealism. In this paper, a specific plan of translation tailored to the Parisian Dada poetry is presented and evaluated on poems by Soupault and Éluard. With the enigma of Dada poetry translation cracked, more translators may approach Dada, leading to more translated poems and thus English-speaking audiences could understand the importance of Paris Dada and its lasting impact on modern art and literature movements.

The Dada Movement

The Dada movement is difficult to pin down because its proponents hold such differing, and sometimes clashing, ideologies. It was serious, but playful. Its art was made by chance, but still showed the artist's hand. It was optimistic, but nihilistic. However, the easiest way to understand Dada is to understand that it is an art, literature, and philosophy movement based on a culture of questioning. The Dadaists' questions included:

- What is art?
- How is artistic success measured?
- What is the role of the artist?

- What is abstraction?
- Why are the traditions of language, logic, and propriety so important to society?
- What is culture and does it matter?
- Why do different socioeconomic classes exist?

The Dadaists seriously opposed seriousness, telling their jokes with straight faces and satirizing even the most sacred institutions at a time and place when freedom of speech was still an iffy subject. Part of this culture of questioning meant that the Dadaists defined their work as "anti-art". This means, not that their work is the opposite of art, but that it is a replacement for what was considered art at the time (McEvilley, 2012). To oversimplify, Dada is a direct break with "traditional" art, which for them was art for the higher classes. At least in the visual art realm, Dada uses nontraditional media or portrays nontraditional structures and includes mundane objects elevated to art, photomontage, or abstract structures.

One of the most important differences between Dada and its predecessors in the Avant-garde movement is that it included an arm into literature through poetry that Futurism, Cubism, and Fauvism generally lacked. Based in part on the enthusiasm of Marinetti's manifestos and the general freedom and randomness of Apollinaire's poetry and form, this vein of poetry founded its place in history with lack of sense, chance creation, and typography.

Paris Dada

The Dada movement which struck Paris in about 1918 seems much more traditionalist than its untamed Zurich and Berlin relatives, despite being brought there and led by Zurich Dadaist Tristain Tzara, one of the least inhibited and most experimental Dadaists of all (Berg & Leroy, 2001. p. 474). Led by men such as Louis Aragon, André Breton, Phillipe Soupault, etc. The French publishers of *Littérature* and *Aventure* did not experiment with typography as much;

in fact, their page layout is almost indistinguishable from that of any book of the time, and the emphasis is almost entirely on text with very little importance given to images or pictorial representations. Even though the poems are more free-form, they are still set in mostly the same font with perfect kerning, spacing, and margins throughout the periodicals. Compare, for instance, Figures 1 and 2, which show the striking difference between the Berlin Dada periodical *Der Dada* and the French Dada journal, *Littérature*.

Figure 1. Der Dada (Groszfield, Hearthaus, & Georgemann, 1917)

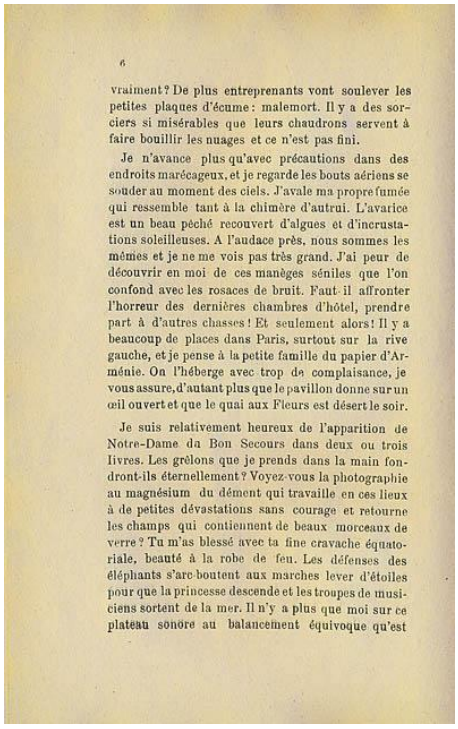


Figure 2. Littérature (Aragon, Breton, & Soupault, 1919a)

Figure 1 shows that *Der Dada*'s editors frequently used images, contrasting fonts, and even type set sideways. *Littérature*, however, takes relatively few liberties. This entire issue is well represented in Figure 2, and uses the same font throughout except a single article which was written by Tzara, already known for his use of contrasting fonts.

Parisian Dada battled between Tzara's optimism and Francis Picabia's (author of 391, the Barcelona Dada publication) nihilism, but it seems that Picabia won. Nihilism was both the hallmark of Paris Dada and its demise (Olson, 2012).

Another important difference between Paris Dada and its counterparts is that shortly after Dada grabbed the hearts of Parisian artists and writers, Surrealism was born. In fact, many of the same artists who brought Dada to Paris were part of the foundation of the new Surrealist movement. Therefore it is quite difficult to separate Dada and Surrealism, since they both share a good number of members and ideologies. The difference is best summed up by saying that written Dada is close to a complete break with literary tradition in general while written Surrealism employs imaginative and seemingly nonsensical imagery and diction in order to express relatively normal symbols and messages, such as in Eluard's "La Terre est bleue...", specifically the second stanza:

Les guêpes fleurissent vert	The wasps bloom in green
L'aube se passe autour du cou	The dawn passes around your neck
Un collier de fenêtres	A necklace of windows
Des ailes couvrent les feuilles	The wings cover the leaves
Tu as toutes les joies solaires	You have all the solar joys
Tout le soleil sur la terre	All the sun on the earth
Sur les chemins de ta beauté.	Under the paths of your beauty

in which the themes are recognizably those of amazement with the world around him and love (Berg & Leroy, 2001. p. 486). These are not novel themes, but ones familiar from the period of Romanticism, although Eluard's imagery presents them in a novel manner.

This Study

Many Paris Dada works of both poetry and prose have yet to be translated. Only two million of the 308 million people in America speak French (*2010 Census Data*, 2010), and therefore the vast majority of the American people cannot understand the works and thus the movement itself remains a stylistic mystery. The argument against translation is that since most Dada writers were tri-lingual, operating with ease in German, French, and English, their poetry can and should only be understood in the original languages. However, by using a comprehensive plan of translation specially tailored to Dada writing, a translator could create vivid and faithful translations of these works that would enable a non-French speaking populace better to understand this movement still shrouded in so much mystery.

Using a plan of translation tailored to Dada poetry, this study seeks to translate a poem by Philippe Soupault called "Antipodes," since Soupault was important to the Paris Dada movement from the moment of its conception to publication. He edited and submitted work for almost every single issue of the periodical, which began in 1919 (Aragon, Breton, & Soupault, 1919b). Also using this plan of translation, this study translates a poem by Paul Éluard called "Imbécile habitant" which captures the nihilism of Paris Dada. These poems were chosen because they bridge the gap between Dada and Surrealism. By linking Dada to Surrealism, the more popular movement born out of the former, perhaps more scholars of Surrealism and scholars of the avant-garde in general will take Dada more seriously and put more effort into recording its historical significance and impact. The specific plan of translation proposed by this study should make it possible to preserve enough of the implied meaning and historical importance of these poems to revive and increase the respect, among Anglophone readers, to which these writers are entitled.

Plan of Translation Overview

In order to translate the poem accurately, a study on the author will be conducted to identify their prevalent themes, then a literal translation drafted of the poem. Next, the poem will be analyzed for content and meaning. This analysis will help to build a "preservation list", or a list of the most important elements of each poem to preserve in the translation. These elements are imagery, tone, cultural allusions, meter, and any other necessary features of the source poem. Next, the literal translation will be edited to retain all the elements of the preservation list, then formatted like the original. Lastly, a discussion about the diction will explicitly identify all choices made in the final translation in order to honor the preservation list.

Significance

Through this study, the plan of translation and the poetry analysis will provide a basis for other scholars to follow in their own translations of poems belonging to the Dada movement. This movement is often ill taught because of its willful inaccessibility and opacity, but it is important to the study of art history and history in general. Dada opened the world up for interpretation, and for that we owe the Dadaists a great debt. The least scholars of translation can do is let others know of Dada's enduring legacy.

Chapter 2: The Original Parisian Dada Movement

Paris Comes Last

Paris was one of the last cities of the seminal five to begin their own Dada movement in 1919. The commonly-established chronology of the Dada movement by city is Zurich, Berlin, Munich, New York, then Paris. There are a few possible reasons that Paris turned to Dada last: Tzara's late arrival, France's culture, and the French Dada movement's own evolution into Surrealism. Tzara, the initiator of the movement in Paris, was also one of the inventors of it in Zurich in 1916, and therefore could not bring Dada to Paris until he had left Zurich. Another reason for this late-coming Dada movement in France is that the French tend to hold tradition in high esteem and were understandably hesitant to embrace this anti-traditional movement. Lastly, they were the last large city to start their own Dada movement because the Parisian Dada movement gave birth to Surrealism, which spread faster than Dada and dwarfed it in extent and historical significance.

Zurich Dada

Zurich is where Dada was first born. During World War I, many individuals, specifically educated ones with reasonably high economic standing, fled to Switzerland in order to escape the brutalities of war. Switzerland's neutrality made Zurich a hotbed of international, educated, bored individuals who looked for something to while away the days. Born of a feeling of revolt against the war and classism and also evolved in part from a combination of Symbolism, Futurism, and Cubism, the bigwigs of Zurich Dada were Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Marcel Janco, Sophie Tauber-Arp, Hans Richter, and Richard Huelsenbeck (Richter, 1964). Hans Richter was a member of the original Zurich Dada movement and wrote a book called *dada: art and anti-art* (sic) which is a combination of memoir and textbook about

the different facets of the Dada movement. While he is an unreliable and biased narrator, his book is one of the only firsthand accounts of this movement.

The movement was begun by Hugo Ball via his Cabaret Voltaire in 1916. The Caberet was a sort of modern salon where artists shared their work with each other and with a limited outside audience, the movement grew out of a few major themes and ideas. The major themes of Zurich Dada were satirizing language conventions, using chance to create art and poetry, as well as the theme of rebelling against authority, classism, and the classist tendencies of the art business. The themes of this original Dada movement were arguably less extreme than other, later cities, but were still novel and unruly for their time. Their rebellion against art as a business gave rise to the term "Anti-art" to describe their works, since they were against the world of art as it existed at the time.

According to art historian Thomas McEvilley, the term "Anti-art" does not mean that these people were creating the opposite of art, but that they were creating a new art to exchange for the old type. He likens the use of the prefix "anti-" not as a creator of opposition, but as it is used in the term Anti-Christ, who "may not be simply opposed to Christ; he may also be Christ's dark alter-ego, Christ turned inside out" (McEvilley, 2012). By this definition, Anti-art is founded upon art in a disdainful way. This conflict between art and Anti-art is an internal battle within each Zurich Dadaist: should they give themselves completely to Anti-art, or should they preserve a tiny bit of artistic virtuosity? For instance, Hans Arp is known for his collages "According to the Laws of Chance" in which he claims absolute chance in the creation of these works via throwing pieces of ripped paper into the air over a backboard, then gluing them down where they fall (Richter, 1964. p. 51). However, an even passing look at his pieces reveals that he does not always leave his works completely to chance. Should someone really tear up paper

and throw it in the air, pieces would usually not land at right angles to one another, nor would they arrange themselves perfectly on the picture plane without overlapping edges. As shown in Figure 3, this work was either carefully composed by Arp or was the result of improbable coincidence.

Figure 3. Untitled (Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance)

(Arp, 1916-17)

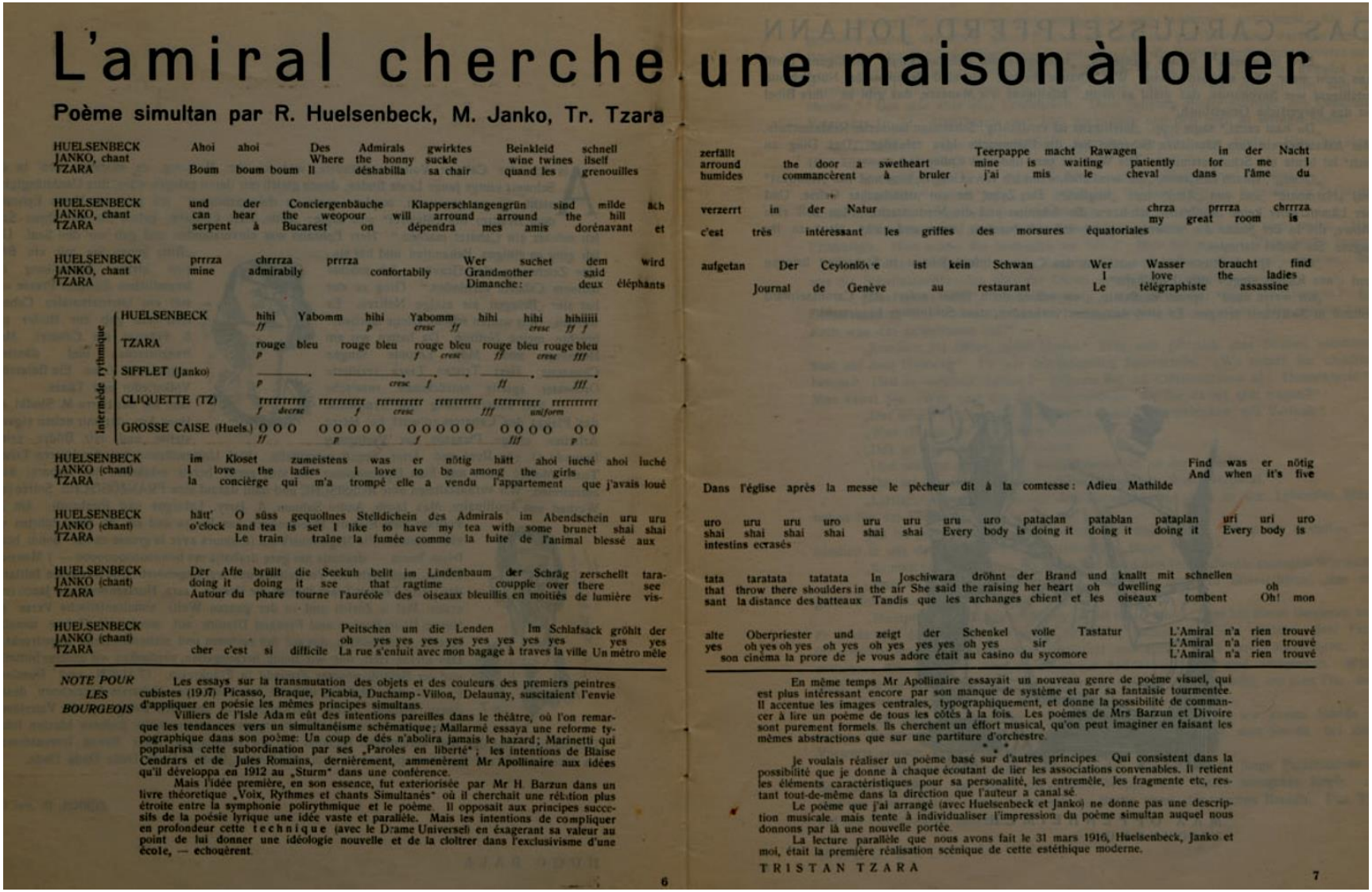
Anti-art is not the opposite of art, it is taking the term "art" and satirizing it. The term "art" for the Dadaists was loaded with meaning pertaining to their time: art was a business in which works that sold well were said to be successful; because of this, art was made exclusively for the higher classes, since they were the ones with a disposable income. Zurich Dadaists instead gifted art to intellectuals and academics. The audiences and recipients of Zurich Dada tended to be the Zurich art community, which was generally composed of members of the upper working class, the middle class, and the upper middle class.

Arp's collage leads us to another important theme used by Zurich Dadaists, the theme of chance. Chance was one of the most important "discoveries" and tools of the Zurich Dada

movement, though as we see above, it is not always given free rein. In addition to Arp's compositions, Tzara was known to create poems by cutting words out of newspapers, tossing them in the air, and transcribing the order they arranged themselves in, though none were published (Richter, 1964. p. 54). This could be considered his own form of automatic writing, a concept that is later popularized in Surrealism.

More important than chance to Zurich Dadaists, or at least Huelsenbeck and Ball, was playing with language. Language was important to these Dadaists since, due to the influx of intellectuals in Zurich fleeing the World War, Dadaists were usually multilingual. The first ever Cabaret Voltaire was done first in Russian, then later in the evening in French, (Richter, 1964). Hans Arp was a Frenchman born in Germany who fluctuated between calling himself Hans and Jan depending on the nationality of the person he was speaking to; Ball, Richter, and Huelsenbeck were German; Tzara was Romanian and French (Richter, 1964. p. 18-28). Due to the number of languages spoken and used and Dadaists creating works in their non-native languages, the Dadaists often played with the absurdity of language and specifically of pronunciation.

One of the ways they played with the multilingual aspect of the Cabaret Voltaire's members was through the simultaneous poem. These were poems with multiple people speaking different parts at the same time. In the Cabaret Voltaire, the norm was three people, and each would usually read in a different language (Huelsenbeck, Janko, Tzara, 1916). The following image is the most famous of the simultaneous poem, "L'amiral cherche une maison à louer" or The Admiral Looks for a House to Rent.



L'amiral cherche une maison à louer

Poème simultan par R. Huelsenbeck, M. Janko, Tr. Tzara

HUELSENBECK Ahoi ahoi Des Admirals gwirktes Beinkleid schnell
JANKO, chant Where the honny suckle wine twines ilself
TZARA Boum boum boum Il déshabilla sa chair quand les grenouilles

HUELSENBECK und der Conciergenbäuche Klapperschlangengrün sind milde ach
JANKO, chant can hear the weopour will arround arround the hill
TZARA serpent à Bucarest on dépendra mes amis dorénavant et

HUELSENBECK prrrza chrrrza prrrza Wer suchet dem wird
JANKO, chant mine admirably confortably Grandmother said
TZARA Dimanche: deux éléphants

Intermède rythmique

HUELSENBECK hihi Yabomm hihi Yabomm hihi hihi hihiiii
ff p cresc ff cresc ff f

TZARA rouge bleu rouge bleu rouge bleu rouge bleu rouge bleu
p f cresc ff cresc fff

SIFFLET (Janko)
p cresc f ff fff

CLIQUETTE (TZ) rrrrrrrrrr rrrrrrrrr rrrrrrrrrr rrrrrrrrr rrrrrrrrrr rrrrrrrrr
f decrsc f cresc fff uniform

GROSSE CAISE (Huels.) O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O
ff p f fff p

HUELSENBECK im Kloset zumeistens was er nötig hätt ahoi luché ahoi luché
JANKO (chant) I love the ladies I love to be among the girls
TZARA la concierge qui m'a trompé elle a vendu l'appartement que j'avais loué

HUELSENBECK hätt' O süss gequollnes Stelldichein des Admirals im Abendschein uru uru
JANKO (chant) o'clock and tea is set I like to have my tea with some brunet shai shai
TZARA Le train traîne la fumée comme la fuite de l'animal blessé aux

HUELSENBECK Der Affe brüllt die Seekuh belit im Lindenbaum der Schräg zerschellt tara-
JANKO (chant) doing it doing it see that ragtime coupple over there see
TZARA Autour du phare tourne l'auréole des oiseaux bleuillis en moitiés de lumière vis-

HUELSENBECK Peitschen um die Lenden Im Schlafsack gröhlt der
JANKO (chant) oh yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes
TZARA cher c'est si difficile La rue s'enfuit avec mon bagage à traves la ville Un métro mêle

zerfällt Teerpappe macht Rawagen in der Nacht
arround the door a swetheart mine is waiting patiently for me I
humides commancèrent à bruler j'ai mis le cheval dans l'âme du

verzerrt in der Natur chrza prrrza chrrrza
my great room is
c'est très intéressant les griffes des morsures équatoriales

aufgetan Der Ceylonlöwe ist kein Schwan Wer Wasser braucht find
I love the ladies
Journal de Genève au restaurant Le télégraphiste assassine

Find was er nötig
And when it's five
Dans l'église après la messe le pêcheur dit à la comtesse: Adieu Mathilde

uro uru uru uro uru uru uru uro pataclan patablan pataplan uri uri uro
shai shai shai shai shai shai Every body is doing it doing it doing it Every body is
intestins ecrasés

tata taratata tatatata In Joschiwara dröhnt der Brand und knallt mit schnellen
that throw there shoulders in the air She said the raising her heart oh dwelling oh
sant la distance des batteaux Tandis que les archanges chient et les oiseaux tombent Oh! mon

alte Oberpriester und zeigt der Schenkel volle Tastatur L'Amiral n'a rien trouvé
yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh yes yes yes oh yes sir L'Amiral n'a rien trouvé
son cinéma la prore de je vous adore était au casino du sycomore L'Amiral n'a rien trouvé

NOTE POUR LES BOURGEOIS

Les essays sur la transmutation des objets et des couleurs des premiers peintres cubistes (1911) Picasso, Braque, Picabia, Duchamp-Villon, Delaunay, suscitaient l'envie d'appliquer en poésie les mêmes principes simultans.

Villiers de l'Isle Adam eût des intentions pareilles dans le théâtre, où l'on remarque les tendances vers un simultanéisme schématique; Mallarmé essaya une reforme typographique dans son poème: Un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hazard; Marinetti qui popularisa cette subordination par ses „Paroles en liberté"; les intentions de Blaise Cendrars et de Jules Romains, dernièrement, ammenèrent Mr Apollinaire aux idées qu'il développa en 1912 au „Sturm" dans une conférence.

Mais l'idée première, en son essence, fut exteriorisée par Mr H. Barzun dans un livre théoretique „Voix, Rythmes et chants Simultanés" où il cherchait une rélation plus étroite entre la symphonie polirythmique et le poème. Il opposait aux principes successifs de la poésie lyrique une idée vaste et parallèle. Mais les intentions de compliquer en profondeur cette technique (avec le Drame Universel) en éxagerant sa valeur au point de lui donner une idéologie nouvelle et de la cloitrer dans l'exclusivisme d'une école, — echouèrent.

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En même temps Mr Apollinaire essayait un nouveau genre de poème visuel, qui est plus intéressant encore par son manque de système et par sa fantaisie tourmentée. Il accentue les images centrales, typographiquement, et donne la possibilité de commancer à lire un poème de tous les côtés à la fois. Les poèmes de Mrs Barzun et Divoire sont purement formels. Ils cherchent un éffort musical, qu'on peut imaginer en faisant les mêmes abstractions que sur une partiture d'orchestre.

* * *

Je voulais réaliser un poème basé sur d'autres principes. Qui consistent dans la possibilité que je donne à chaque écoutant de lier les associations convenables. Il retient les éléments caractéristiques pour sa personalité, les entremêle, les fragmente etc, restant tout-de-même dans la direction que l'auteur a canalisé.

Le poème que j'ai arrangé (avec Huelsenbeck et Janko) ne donne pas une description musicale, mais tente à individualiser l'impression du poème simultan auquel nous donnons par là une nouvelle portée.

La lecture parallèle que nous avons fait le 31 mars 1916, Huelsenbeck, Janko et moi, était la première réalisation scénique de cette estéthique moderne.

TRISTAN TZARA

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Figure 4. Simultaneous Poem (Huelsenbeck, Janco, & Tzara, 1916)

Figure 4's simultaneous poem shows the Zurich Dada interest in multilingualism and also in the discord of crowds. Their growing interest in this discord leads the Dadaists to more linguistic experimentation and a higher use of nonsense.

Tristan Tzara was one of the most vocal of the Zurich Dadaists, claiming the title of editor and also of "director of the Dada Movement" in the third issue of *Dada*, a periodical created by Zurich Dadaists to showcase both their visual and literary works done in the Cabaret Voltaire (Ades, 2006. p. 19). One of his most popular poems, "Dada Review No. 2", is hereafter reproduced:

> Five negresses in a motorcar
> exploded their trajectories following the directions of my 5 fingers
> when I put my hand to my bosom to pray to God (sometimes)
> around my head there is a misty light from moonfaced fellows
> the green halo of saints round flights of intelligence
> tralalalalalalalalalala
> which one sees now being pierced by shells
>
> there is a young man who is eating his lungs
> then has diarrhœa
> then lets out a luminous fart
> like a homing bird one sings about in poems
> like death blasted from a cannon
> his fart was so bright that the house became dark as midnight
> the great sailing ships he opens his book like an angel though leaves have settled on it,
> spring, like a beautiful page in typography
> zoumbaï zoumbaï zoumbaï di
> your design in my intestines has devoured good and evil
>
> above all evil like the joy of a general
> because since I am scared of rats eating the church without servants I have
> transported the draperies and on each
> was our Lord and on each lord was my
> heart
> I gave him my heart as a tip hihi
> (Tzara, 2006)

Tzara was known for his use of nonsense coupled with a vague distaste for humanity and culture, such as in this poem where he satirizes church and religion by saying that the war has

killed them, “the green halo of saints round flights of intelligence...which one sees now being pierced by shells” (lines 5-7). This seems to refer to a picture of a saint painted on a chapel wall being destroyed by guns fired in the First World War that is going on at the time of the writing of this poem. The paintings of saints are literally being shot right now, and Tzara highlights the absurdity of these sacred spaces being the main battlefields for war, since cathedrals were often used as strongholds. The idea for using non-words such as “tralalalalalalalalalala”, “zoumbaï di”, and “hihi” in line with a narrative were actually taken from Richard Huelsenbeck’s works and his love of Primitivism.

First to experiment with nonsense words amongst the Dadaists was Huelsenbeck, who was a fan of Primitivism at the time, a movement that examined and celebrated artifacts and linguistic tendencies of so-called “primitive” civilizations, usually from Africa and South America (Richter, 1964. p. 20). An excerpt of “This is how flat the world is” by Richard Huelsenbeck:

> The garbage cans are pregnant
> Sokobauno Sokobauno
> and the dead how they rise above,
> torches around their head
> Voilà the horses bent over the barrels full of rain...
> And now the vicar closing his pants rataplan rataplan
> and the hair growing out of his ears
> (Richter, 1964. p. 21, citing Huelsenbeck’s own translation)

This poem by Huelsenbeck uses a combination of storytelling and onomatopœia in the style of African storytelling, using nonsense words to denote sound effects. This poem was also taken from Richter’s book because he provided the only example of this poem in English available. Huelsenbeck’s use of nonsense words later influenced Hugo Ball when he wrote and performed his compilation of sound poems, including “Karawane”. These poems were written completely of nonsense words chosen for their auditory appeal. Unfortunately, the performances were

neither recorded nor filmed due to the limits of technology at the time, though we have photographs of Ball's "cardboard cubist" outfit and one of the sound poems he performed.

KARAWANE

jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla
grossiga m'pfa habla horem
égiga goramen
higo bloiko russula huju
hollaka hollala
anlogo bung
blago bung
blago bung
bosso fataka
ü üü ü
schampa wulla wussa ólobo
hej tatta gôrem
eschige zunbada
wulubu ssubudu uluw ssubudu
tumba ba- umf
kusagauma
ba - umf

Figure 5. Hugo Ball and Karawane (with color added)

(Bromberg, 2013)

One interpretation of the poem portrayed in Figure 5 is that, since Karawane translates to English as "caravan", this poem is the sound effects of a moving caravan minus the storytelling clauses that Huelsenbeck had in his poetry. This poem is entirely made up of sounds, and these sounds can either tell a story or mystify an audience. Either way, this poem broke the mold in that it had no recognizable words in it, yet it was still offered as a poem. It satirizes language by using nonsense that sounds meaningful, yet is actually incomprehensible.

Therefore, the most important literary practices to come out of Zurich Dada were the use of chance, automatic writing (though it generally was not published), playing with language, and

sound poetry. These would later impact Paris Dada's poetry and literary conventions as well as the entire poetry world, as these revolutionary practices still impact modern poetry.

Dada Abroad

The Dada movement traveled to Berlin, Barcelona, and New York before it finally reached Paris. Along the way the Dada movement acquired new facets that would be important to the Parisian movement when it finally arrived in 1919. From Berlin it gained more typographic and political themes as well as adding photomontage (a collage made of photographs) and public dissent to the Dadaists' toolbox. New York is where Marcel Duchamp joined up and questioned the role of the artist through his use of readymades, specifically with his work "The Fountain" and its impact on the art community. Barcelona saw the rise of Francis Picabia, who combined cultural commentary, nihilism, and Russian constructivism (which used the machine aesthetic to inspire thought in the audience).

Berlin Dada

In Berlin, Dada was imported by Richard Huelsenbeck and evolved while there. Berlin Dada focused more on anti-classism and automatic writing, with authors such as Huelsenbeck and Raoul Hausmann and artists such as Hannah Höch, George Grossman, and Johann Baader. The major tools of Berlin Dada were cultural commentary, nontraditional typography, and automatic writing. These poets and artists set out to answer the question "What is Dada?" with the following poem:

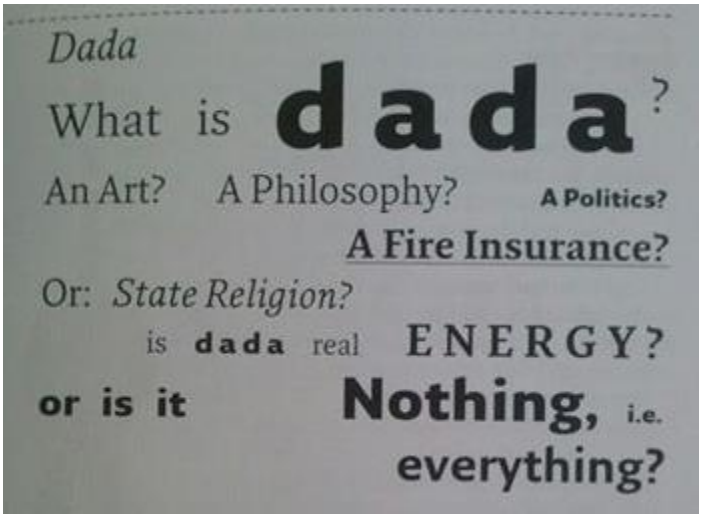


Figure 6. What is dada?

(Anonymous, 2006)

The poem represented in Figure 6 captures the major themes of Berlin Dada perfectly: it shows the different typography with its use of contrasting fonts and nontraditional spacing; it portrays cultural commentary in its use of the phrase “state religion” or a religion enforced by the political climate, which is actually happening in Germany at the time of the Weimar republic due in part to the Antisemitism that will become infamous in the next war; and it shows the hallmark of automatic writing in the metaphor that Dada is “fire insurance”, which at the time was nonsense but ironically is now accurate, as these once-inexpensive magazines now sell for large sums. The copy of Der Dada 2 available online on the International Dada Archive has a small handwritten section on the third page says that this particular copy was sold for $4,000 at some point. Therefore, when the Germans said “Put Your Money In Dada!”, they were right (Central Office of Dadaism, 2006. p. 86) . For a four-page magazine printed on cheap, acidic paper, this four thousand dollar pricetag means that Dadaism indeed was a fire insurance. A couple of these in a safe deposit box would ensure economic safety.

Hausmann also used automatic writing and cultural allusions to satirize postwar Germany and the Weimar Republic, as seen in his poem/prose piece, "Alitterel", where he says:

> Tooth roots are to be removed by hand grenades. Property and Intellect are the economy of the latrine. How else would the intellect-dregs exist but by taking control of the world-intellect in their minds. Every swine of a writer is already independent, communist. Communism as boot polish, ten pence a litre, that's how you write good references for yourself. The masses coerce these cowards, who were already manipedicuring self-discipline. Without a doubt, the masses are unintellectual. We are anti-intellectual. Thanks for the flea in the ear. The masses are on the move, the intellectual has had the same Buddho as a backside for the last 10,000 years. The masses couldn't care less about art or intellect. Neither could we. But that doesn't make us a society in transition to communism. The atmosphere of shady horse-trading (German Revolution) is not ours. The masses do well to the intellectual junk shop. We demand forced labour for these theatre-spectators of Schiller's mercy. We want to go further, and raise the destruction of all reason to absolute idiocy. We demand the manufacture of intellect and art in factories. (Hausmann, 2006)

Automatic writing is writing in quick succession things off the top of one's head without caring for grammar, language, or sentence structure, and was used by the Dadaists to provide commentary on the author's role as a linguist and also on the editor's lack of importance. Automatic writing also usually combines words in unique, sometimes nonsensical ways, as when Hausmann coins the portmanteau phrase "manipedicuring self-discipline." Cultural allusions are heavily used by the Berlin Dadaists, as seen in this poem when Hausmann refers to the German Revolution as "shady horse-trading." This poem serves as a commentary on Germany and its

culture at the time. Hausmann was one of the leaders of the Berlin Dada movement along with Huelsenbeck.

As to the field of visual arts, Berlin Dada gave rise to photomontage as a form of cultural commentary. Photomontage is a type of collage created entirely from photographs. For example, in her most famous Dada work "Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany" shown in Figure 7, Hannah Höch combines pictures of celebrities, politicians, Albert Einstein, and the Dadaists in strange positions combined with different bodies and machine parts in order to provide commentary upon each of their roles. As seen in Figure 7, The Keiser Wilhelm II is the major portrait in the upper-right corner, his moustache replaced by wrestlers to show the political battles after World War I, a tophat on his head to denote American Dandyism, and a gun pointed at his head by seemingly his own hand over words proclaiming that he is the "anti dada". In this way, Höch manages to add cultural commentary to existing photographs of actual people, creating a new and potent form of political cartoon for the Berlin Dadaists.

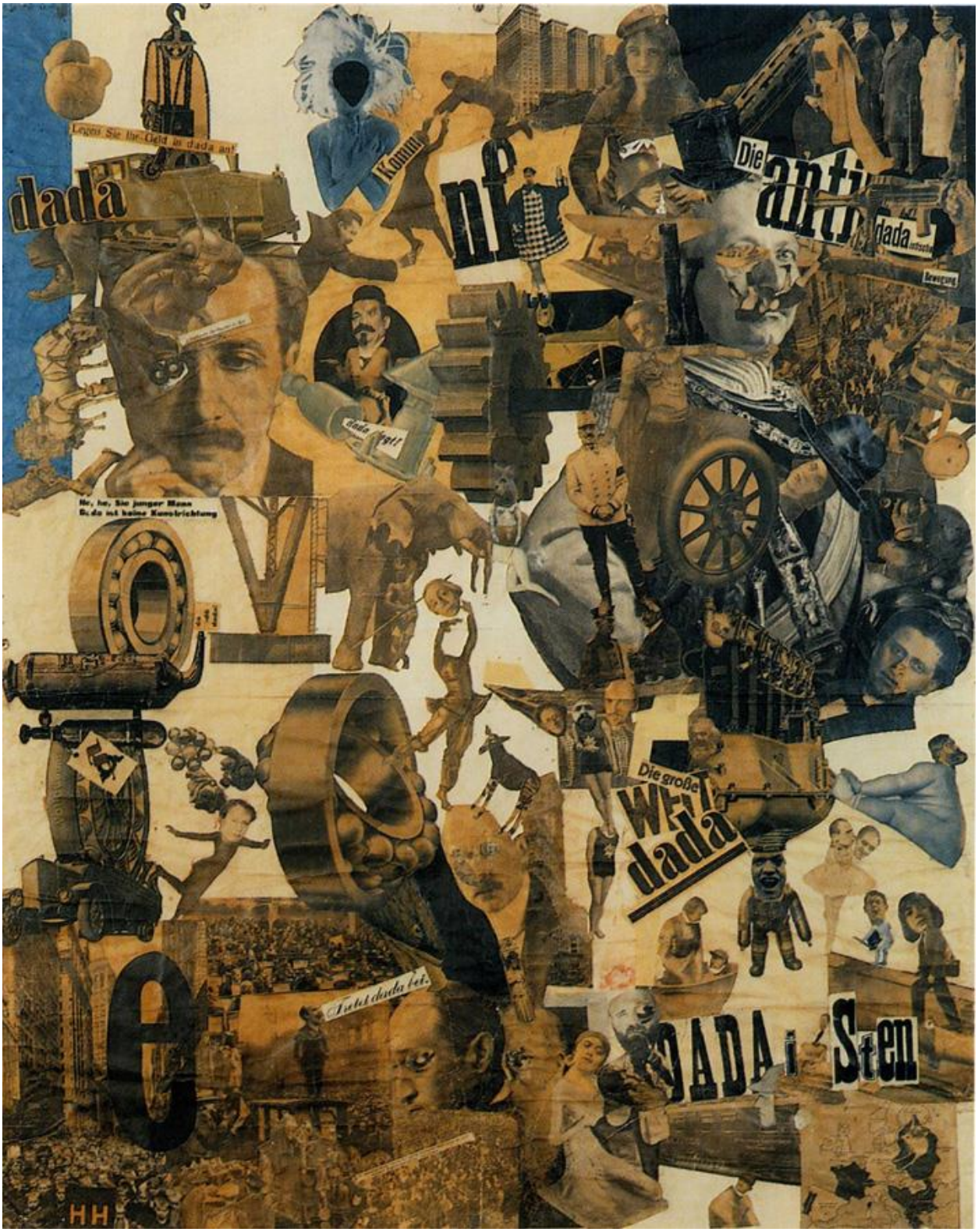


Figure 7. Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany

(Hoch, 1919-20)

New York Dada

New York Dada is significant primarily for one artist: Marcel Duchamp. One of the most popular Dadaists, Duchamp revolutionized the artistic end of Dada. He invented and popularized the use of "readymades," or sculptures that were already created. His most famous piece, "Fountain", is an inverted urinal signed with the fake signature of R. Mutt. In the R. Mutt case, illustrated in *Blindman No. 2* (which he authored under various pseudonyms). Duchamp submitted the "Fountain" to the Gallery of Independents, which he had founded after being rejected by a Cubist gallery for his painting "Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2", shown in Figure 8, because it was both Cubist and Futurist (it showed simultaneity, or events at different times expressed on the same picture plane, the major Futurist aesthetic, yet it was painted in the Cubist abstracted shapes combined into representation style) (Tomkins, 1968).

Figure 8. Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2

(Duchamp, 1913)

Duchamp decided that it was absurd that a movement that had only been around for a few years already had strict enough rules to reject works that combined elements of multiple movements, so he founded his own gallery, the Gallery of Independents, to take works that did not fit into any one movement. Then, to test them, he sent in anonymously the "Fountain," signed by the fictional R. Mutt. The other members rejected it, and he publically shamed them in his magazine, *Blindman No. 2,* as seen in Figure 9:

Figure 9. Blindman, No. 2 (Duchamp, 1917)

Fountain by R. Mutt

Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz

THE EXHIBIT REFUSED BY THE INDEPENDENTS

THE BLIND MAN

The Richard Mutt Case

They say any artist paying six dollars may exhibit.

Mr. Richard Mutt sent in a fountain. Without discussion this article disappeared and never was exhibited.

What were the grounds for refusing Mr. Mutt's fountain:—

1. *Some contended it was immoral, vulgar.*
2. *Others, it was plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing.*

Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bath tub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' show windows.

Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object.

As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges.

"Buddha of the Bathroom"

.I suppose monkeys hated to lose their tail. Necessary, useful and an ornament, monkey imagination could not stretch to a tailless existence (and frankly, do you see the biological beauty of our loss of them?), yet now that we are used to it, we get on pretty well without them. But evolution is not pleasing to the monkey race; "there is a death in every change" and we monkeys do not love death as we should. We are like those philosophers whom Dante placed in his Inferno with their heads set the wrong way on their shoulders. We walk forward looking backward, each with more of his predecessors' personality than his own. Our eyes are not ours.

The ideas that our ancestors have joined together let no man put asunder! In *La Dissociation des Idees,* Remy de Gourmont, quietly analytic, shows how sacred is the marriage of ideas. At least one charming thing about our human institution is that although a man marry he can never be *only* a husband. Besides being a money-making device and the *one* man that *one* woman can sleep with in legal purity without sin he may even be as well some other woman's very personification of her abstract idea. Sin, while to his employees he is nothing but their "Boss," to his children only their "Father," and to himself certainly something more complex.

But with objects and ideas it is different. Recently we have had a chance to observe their meticulous monogomy.

When the jurors of *The Society of Independent Artists* fairly rushed to remove the bit of sculpture called the *Fountain* sent in by Richard Mutt, because the object was irrevocably associated in their atavistic minds with a certain natural function of a secretive sort. Yet to any "innocent" eye

Richard Mutt, Duchamp says in this issue, fulfilled the only requirement of showing in the Gallery. He paid his six dollars and submitted his work. Instead of showing the "Fountain", as promised in their contract, the Gallery of Independents not only rejected it, but disposed of it. To Duchamp this was a betrayal, as he had helped found this gallery to give every artist the chance to show their work, no matter what that entailed. When the other board members turned up their noses at a piece, and Duchamp reacted with anger.

As shown in the Richard Mutt case, New York Dada was mainly concerned with breaking artistic tradition. Though antitraditionalism is prevalent in all incarnations of Dada, here it was the major tool of Dada. Though he was a Frenchman, Duchamp's works tended to stay in New York where he was an expatriate, and he is therefore not considered part of the Parisian Dada movement. Also, he had little to do with literature other than his *Blindman* periodicals and the scandals he played up in them (Howard, 1994).

Barcelona Dada

Barcelona is where Francis Picabia joins the Dada movement. In Barcelona to avoid the war in France, Picabia visited New York where he interacted with Duchamp in 1917, when Duchamp was organizing his "Fountain" scandal. Later that year, when Picabia returned to Barcelona, he started the periodical 391 with other expatriates of the war. This periodical traveled with Picabia wherever he went, and on a trip to Zurich in 1918 and his "skeptical, ironic and nihilistic attitude affected Zurich Dada and Tzara in particular, while the 'movement' also made itself felt in 391" (Ades, 2006). Picabia was known for both his machinist drawings (usually with ironic labeling) and his nihilist literary contributions.

Before his interaction with Duchamp and during his first visit to New York, Picabia published the periodical 291 in reference to photographer Steiglitz's gallery, 291 (Ades, 2006). Figure 10 is an illustration taken from 291 and is one of Picabia's most popular:

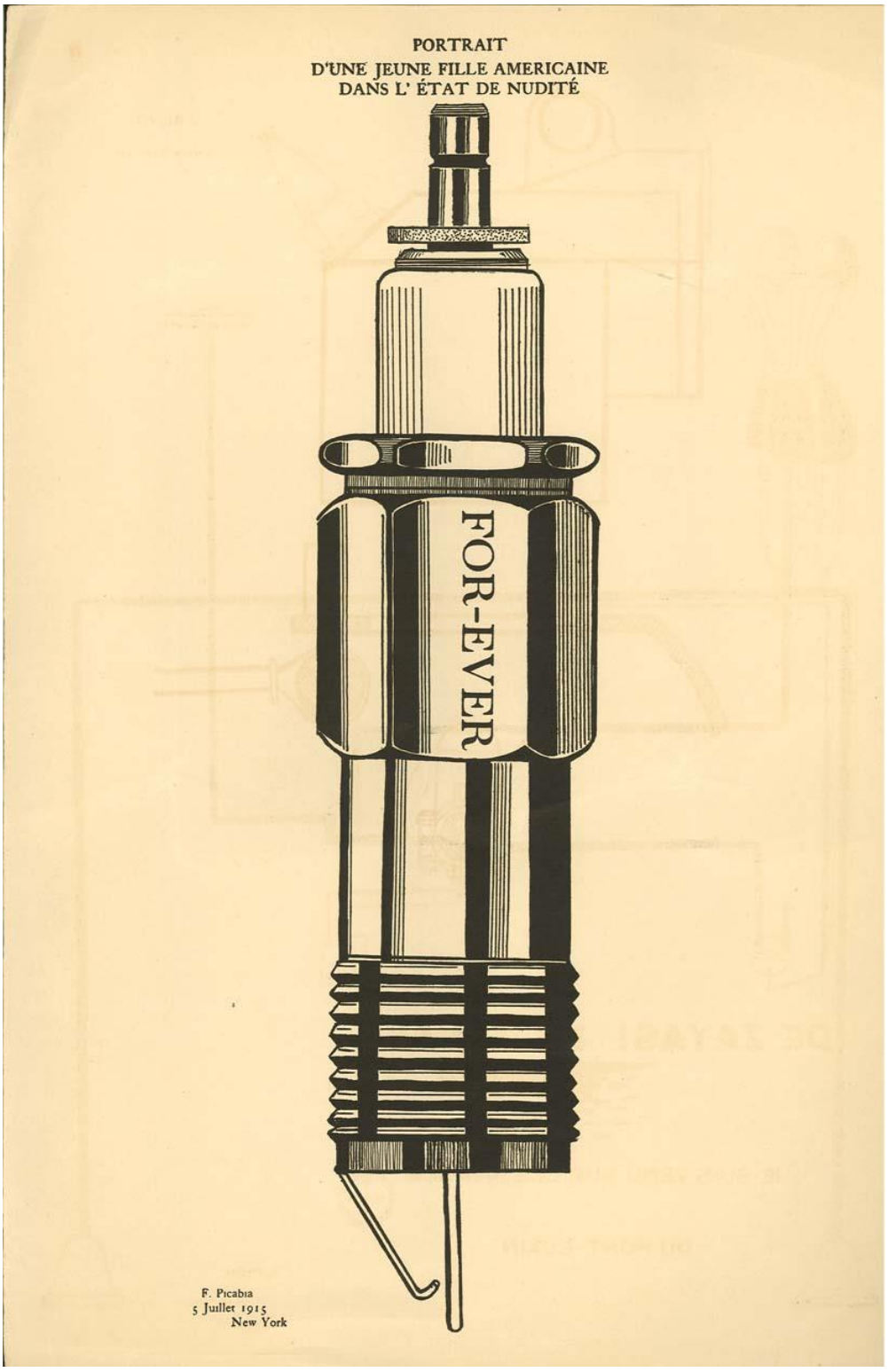


Figure 10. Portrait d'une Jeune Fille Américaine...

(Picabia, 1915)

Figure 10 portrays Picabia's illustration of a sparkplug with the word "FOR-EVER" on it, which is labeled in French "portrait of a young American girl in a state of nudity". It is interesting that Picabia kept the title in French for a New York publication, but this may have been to make the piece look more artistic than the accurate sketch of a sparkplug on its own would be to a non-French-speaking audience. This work is either a sexualization of machinery or a mechanization of sexuality. In either case, Picabia's "Portrait d'une Jeune Fille Américaine..." manages to subvert popular culture in a way that relates to Dada's cultural commentary. This piece was made before Picabia met Duchamp, meaning that this work is Picabia's own type of readymade, not completely unlike Duchamp's "Fountain" in its conception.

In 1919 Picabia came to Zurich and worked with the Zurich Dadaists on *391 No. 8,* in which he does an automatic writing piece with Tristan Tzara. In his part, the sense of nihilism is strong, as one can see from the first few lines:

> Chance is logical the turn of the cards which are only odd and even at night the greatest endeavour lies in the onset of the profile of love where man shows no signs of dispensing with the sustenance of ethical matters in vegetation wreckage to appoint rats in strict hierarchy with a theological gesture which makes fine slaves total surrender but the bounds of mute villains creates a grammarian creator in incoherent language only by experience to the point of ridicule like the gravity of Descartes' discourse particularly useful and precise... (Picabia & Tzara, 2006).

Picabia mocks sacred institutions such as classism, theology, and classical texts. He mocks classism by saying that is it merely "to appoint rats in strict hierarchy...which makes fine slaves," where he reveals the absurdity of hierarchies and how they change us into slaves. He adds an extra layer of commentary in this line as well by saying that the appointment of these rat

hierarchies is effected "with a theological gesture," meaning that these absurd class lines are based on religion. Lastly, he insults Descartes, one of the most beloved philosophers by the French people, by saying that the gravity of Descartes' lectures is "incoherent language...to the point of ridicule". Therefore, in one fell swoop, Picabia has managed to negate some of the most sacred institutions of French culture, all while adopting the illogical and nihilistic face of chance.

Picabia joined Paris Dada in early 1920, becoming one of their major players and bringing his nihilistic worldview and *391* with him to pervade Paris Dada's culture.

Paris Dada

Parisian Dada originated with Tzara's coming to Paris in 1919. The main players were André Breton, Paul Éluard, Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, and Francis Picabia. It is mainly a literary movement and later led to Surrealism.

This movement uses the cultural commentary, chance, and automatic writing of its predecessors, although (perhaps due to the Parisian Dada publisher Au Sans Pareil) the Paris Dadaists experimented little with typography and layout. This region is also characterized by the huge number of publications it put out, since that same publisher decided that more publications would sell better than a few publications with more issues. Publications such as *Projecteur*, *Z*, and *Cannibale* only lasted one or two issues apiece. One of the reasons that Au Sans Pareil kept the Dadaist publications such a short chain is that in Paris, unlike any other city, Dada was popular. It sold relatively well and attracted a larger and more affluent audience than other cities' incarnations (Peterson, 2001. p. 18).

Due in part to the combination of Tzara and Picabia's influence on the group, Paris Dada is characterized by nihilism (Olson, 2012). Also, most of the players were anarchists during this time, though when Surrealism became popular they generally switched to communism. They

were anti-classists like their predecessors, but much less obviously in their works and actions. The Paris Dadaists attempted more public events in order to anger the audience. They held public readings that often resulted in riots, but they also managed to be taken seriously by the higher classes after Breton worked to get them in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, a large newspaper (Richter, 1964, p. 182). This was one of the first times Dada had been seen as a legitimate movement by the upper classes.

However, the nihilism of Paris Dada is also what caused its demise, since many of the Dadaists longed for meaning in their lives. This meaning was derived instead with the invention of Surrealism, which attempted to achieve unlimited happiness by the Freudian expedient of freeing the id.

Chapter 3: Plan of Translation

Poetry Translation Basics

The goal of most poetry translation is that the finished product does justice to the original and in some cases becomes a good poem on its own. Translators of poetry are trying to let a new group understand a poem. The Dada movement and the Avant-garde in general opened up art not just to beauty, but to other things such as emotion, imagination, and nonsense, meaning that modern poetry translation cannot simply endow a new audience with beauty, but with whatever else gives that poem merit in its original language.

A few terms are important to know in the discussion of translation. For instance, a translator begins with a source text, which is the original text to be translated. This is written in the source language. The translated text is called the target text and written in the target language (Hervey & Higgins, 2003). These terms are illustrated in Figure 11. For the purposes of this study, the source texts are the Dada poems, the source language is French, and the target text are the translations in the target language of English.

Figure 11. Translation Terms

Some academics believe that poetry translation is inadvisable for two reasons: the first risk is the trap of literal translation; the second risk is that translators must be poets themselves, and then their target texts are taken as a separate work rather than a translation. As Tomlinson says in his book *Metamorphoses: Translating Poetry*,

> Two other threats have persisted to admonish the translator of poetry. Both of them seem to be the products of the academic milieu, distrustful still of the way the non-expert—usually meaning the poet—might set to work as translator. The first of these threats hints that the only true translation would be a kind of mirror image of the original, and therefore it is either best not to try, or best to leave it to the experts in the field of French, Russian, or whatever. The second threat is the outwardly bullying, inwardly fearful child of the first—the preference for a rather staid but 'accurate' rendering into tame iambics of, say, Pushkin, so that nothing extraneous, as it were, should come between the reader and the original (Tomlinson, 2003. p. 22).

For the purposes of this study, Tomlinson is the best translation source because he himself is a poet and a poetry translator who believes that poetry translation is not just the translation of the words, but the translation of the spirit of the words. The idea that poetry has to be translated spiritually rather than literally is important in the translation of Dada poetry since the words themselves used in Dada poetry can often be meaningless, especially with automatic writing.

Poetry translators are up against the wall of these academics who believe that the poems are only potent in their own language, with perhaps a very strict guide of exactly literal translation, a word-for-word translation, also called metaphase (Hervey & Higgins, 2003). However, these translations lose the important parts of the original poems, whether that be fluidity, assonance, or even cultural allusions. The next inadequacy of translated poems is the role of the translator as poet. There is a school of thought that says that poetry translator must be poets themselves, and that "Translation of poetry is essentially a compromise between the original texts and the present interests and capacities of a given writer" (Tomlinson, 2003. p. 24).

This compromise means that in order to effectively translate poetry, one must be able to take the raw, literal translation and turn it into a new poem in the target language. However, the more poetic freedom, the further from the source text and the further from translation. Therein lies the problem with poetry translation: the more literal the translation, the more impact is lost. There is a spectrum of translation, and the choice of where on that spectrum to land impacts the message of the target text.

The spectrum of translation goes from literal translation or metaphase, to paraphrase, to imitation and adaptation. Metaphase, or literal translation, as we have already discussed, is a word-for-word translation of the source text, much like an online translation program would provide. These are seen as the most faithful translations by some, since they are usually paired with the source text so that one can see how the poem originally looked and perhaps how it was pronounced. Metaphase is good for people who know the language enough to appreciate the original, but also to better understand it through the translation. However, if translating it for a larger audience of non-source-language-speakers, metaphase loses most of the aspects of the original poetry. Tomlinson goes as far as to say that literal translation is not translation because it is "closer to a dictionary" than a poem (Tomlinson, 2003. p. 28). Literal translation works well for textbooks or academic writing, but not for understanding poetry. This spectrum is illustrated pictorialy in Figure 12 for clarification.

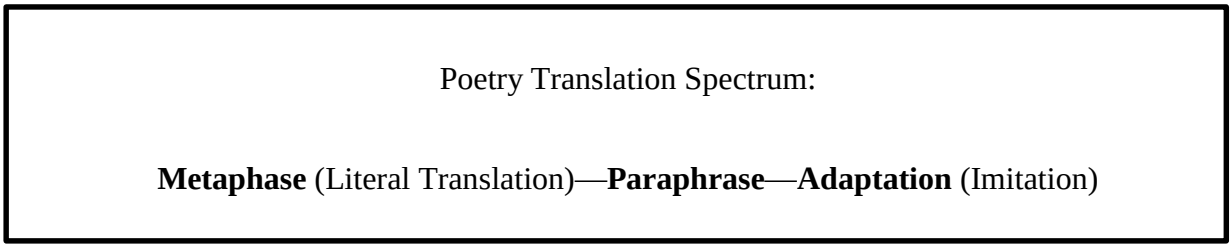


Figure 12. Poetry Translation Spectrum

Paraphrase is the middle ground of translation. It keeps all or most of the same message, but allows small liberties over syntax and diction. Paraphrase is close to the text, but not bound to it, "or translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered" (Tomlinson, 2003. p. 23). Paraphrase is generally the path taken by prose translators, in order to honor the author's original diction. However, for poetry, this too is restricting, since it means that poetic meter and rhythm are generally difficult, if not impossible, to reproduce in the target language if following the text so closely. Therefore, the two favorite translation types of poetry translators are imitation and adaptation.

Imitation and adaptation have a similar level of flexibility of word choice within the spectrum of translation. Use of "imitation" to describe a translation implies that the target text is no longer a translation of the source text, but a counterfeit, almost as if the translator was trying to plagiarize the source text's author and elevate their own poetry at the same time. Imitation is generally not even viewed as a legitimate form of translation, since they tend to "consider as 'translation' any poem which makes a sustained allusion to a previous poem" (Tomlinson, 2003. p. 24). Both imitation and adaptation take a freer approach to translation, in which the translator identifies the most important elements of the source text to preserve, then keeps whatever poetic elements she sees fit to keep in the target text while staying the most faithful to the primarily identified elements. This type of translation preserves message before diction, and is the primary method of artistic translators. Though academics, generally in the source language, will say that adaptation is imitation, and that it is not a valid type of translation, the truth of the matter seems to be that no matter what type of translation one does on a work, someone will be unhappy about it.

Despite the numerous difficulties and such, there is still hope to not only create a meaningful translation to share a work with a new audience, but in the process to create something new and impactful in and of itself, or as Tomlinson says, "If Chaucer was 'grant translateur', he translated mostly by incorporation and transforming other men's work in poems that are ultimately great originals" (Tomlinson, 2003. p. 21).

What to Preserve

According to Tomlinson and as denoted in the previous section, the first thing a translator must do, before beginning to translate a text, is to identify the most important elements of the source text that must be carried over into the target text. These elements vary widely between movement, author, and even poem. William Jay Smith's article "Finding the Proper Equivalent" is the best resource in finding the requirements for a Dada poetry preservation list, or a list of elements of source texts to preserve, since it is the only article written by a translator of avant-garde poetry which details his own process of translation. This article details Smith's adventures in translating the work of Russian poet and "Child of the 60's" Andrei Voznesensky, who seems to have surrealist roots if not dada as well (Smith, 1989. p. 201). In this article, Smith chooses a different specific element or elements to preserve in each of his target texts. The main elements chosen for preservation were imagery, tone, cultural allusions, and meter.

In the poem "Sources," Smith had the good luck to discuss the poem with Voznesensky prior to translation. Voznesensky was trying to explain the poem as imagery, since he had the idea for it by going to Berkeley and seeing a female student wearing black bellbottoms, and thinking that her pants looked like two shadows cast from the light of her stomach. Rather than translating the poem literally, Smith opted for an adaptation in which, while much of the diction

is kept similar, the rhymes and meter were sacrificed in order to preserve the image, or as he put it, "The image had been kept, if nothing else" (Smith, 1989. p. 204).

The poem "A Boat on the Shore" received different treatment, since Smith decided to add the quippy ending of "Just wait, little iron, till you're ironed out!" He states that he feels comfortable in making this addition because it "seemed to me legitimate because it is clearly implied in the original and is in keeping with the somewhat sassy tone of the poem" (Smith, 1989. p. 210). This aspect of adaptation means that if the translator wants to preserve an aspect that is not easily translatable, he or she may add a similarly-toned saying in the target language. Tone is difficult to translate literally, so adaptation is a good way to capture it.

Another thing that Smith added in order to make his translation more viable to his English-speaking audience is cultural allusion, specifically in the poem "Saga". Smith added the name of the city, Leningrad, since "in the original the city is not named: the Russian reader recognizes it at once by the reference to its two famous buildings, a reference that would be lost on most English readers were the city not specifically identified" (Smith, 1989. p. 218). This means that should the translator stumble across cultural allusions such as this, while she could state the cultural significance of these buildings in notes or footnotes, directly stating the alluded-to element is also a choice.

One of the least important elements to retain in translation seems to be the poetic verse. However, some poems arguably rely heavily on these elements, and their flowing rhythmic nature was specifically chosen to accompany the message they set forth to communicate. For example, when Smith was translating a poem of Voznesensky's called "Her Shoes", he decided that the structure really was important to the overall translation, saying that "In my translation I tried to retain the metrical pattern of the original and by the use of assonance to adhere as closely

as possible to the whole rhyme scheme without upsetting the fragile balance of the whole" (Smith, 1989. p. 211). According to Smith, rhyme and meter are important to preserve.

However, there is one important process that I cannot emulate in my work that Smith manages to follow every time he translates Voznesensky's poetry: he is able to converse with the author. It makes sense that a translator with a direct relationship to the author feels freer to take risks with translation, since the latter is there to approve or disapprove of creative translation choices. Of the ending he added to "A Boat on the Shore", he states that "In any case, like all the liberties I have taken with Voznesensky's work, it had the author's approval" (Smith, 1989. p. 209). This of course gives him not only more liberty as a translator, but more authority in the legitimacy of his works.

To summarize, a list of things that might be important to preserve from the source text to target text are imagery, tone, cultural allusions, and meter. This list is not comprehensive, but consistent among all of the poems translated in this study.

French Dada Applications

The difficulty with Dada poetry is that, not only does it not contain many of the same features of pre-avant-garde poetry, but it often actively rejects those conventions. This means that there needs to be a specific strategy of translation for Dada poetry, or at least for avant-garde poetry. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, French Dada is much more traditionalist than the other Dada movements, so it generally can be translated the same way as other poetry. Therefore, the following is a plan of translation tailored specifically to French Dada Poetry.

Specific Plan of Translation

The plan of translation is to research the author, analyze each poem, fill out a preservation list for the poem, translate the poem as literally as possible, edit the poem in order

to preserve and highlight the preservation list, and finally produce a finished, formatted version. This finished version will lie between paraphrase and adaptation on the spectrum of fidelity to the text and author.

Each author will be researched as to not only their involvement with the Dada movement, but their lives in general prior to the writing of the source text, their relationships, their political participation, and themes often found in their poetry. This research is significant in order to understand their poetry and identify recurrent themes in their works.

Each poem will be assigned a "preservation list," or a list of elements that should be preserved in the target text. As described in the "What to Preserve" section of this study, the preservation list will include imagery, tone, cultural allusions, meter, and any other note of interest as pertaining to each individual poem. A sample preservation list is illustrated in Figure 13.

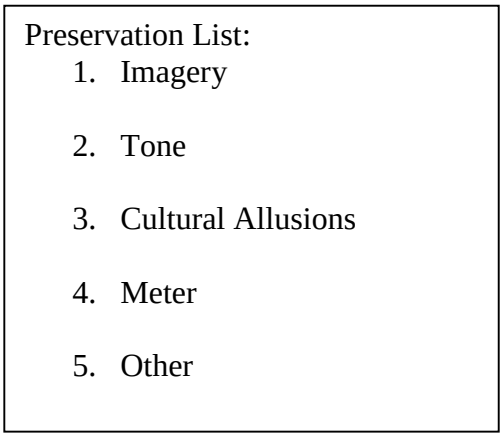


Figure 13. Preservation List Outline

A literal translation will be performed first to allow further evaluation and to see how much needs to change before the end product will be intelligible. This will then be edited according to the preservation list until the finished product, the target text, contains as many elements of the preservation list as possible.

The finished poem is included, following the format of the source text. Each specific choice made towards the editing of the poem is discussed and analyzed in order to justify all freedoms taken from the source text.

Chapter 4: Soupault's "Antipodes"

Philippe Soupault's Life and Themes

One of the founders of both Parisian Dada and Surrealism in general, Philippe Soupault has fallen into anonymity, despite his high status in the movements. Nearly every biography of his includes a sentence on his early life, a sentence on him joining Dada then founding surrealism with Breton by writing Les Champs Magnetiques in tandem, and then a sentence on his either leaving by choice or being forcibly expelled from the Surrealist movement because he did not support the overwhelming Marxism the group developed (Olson, 2012).

According to columnist and art historian Kirby Olsen, common topics of his poetry were desire, sex, energy, and the hope to release the id to discover true, simple happiness (2012). This id refers to the Freudian subconscious or inborn portion of one's personality and it includes biological functions (Freud, 1991). This is mainly a tenant of Surrealism, as Freud published this theory originally in a 1920 essay, yet the concept of an id to unleash could have been popular before Soupault wrote "Antipodes" without necessarily being called such. Nevertheless, the optimism for a better future could well be an aspect of this poem, without the necessity of knowing the theory of the id.

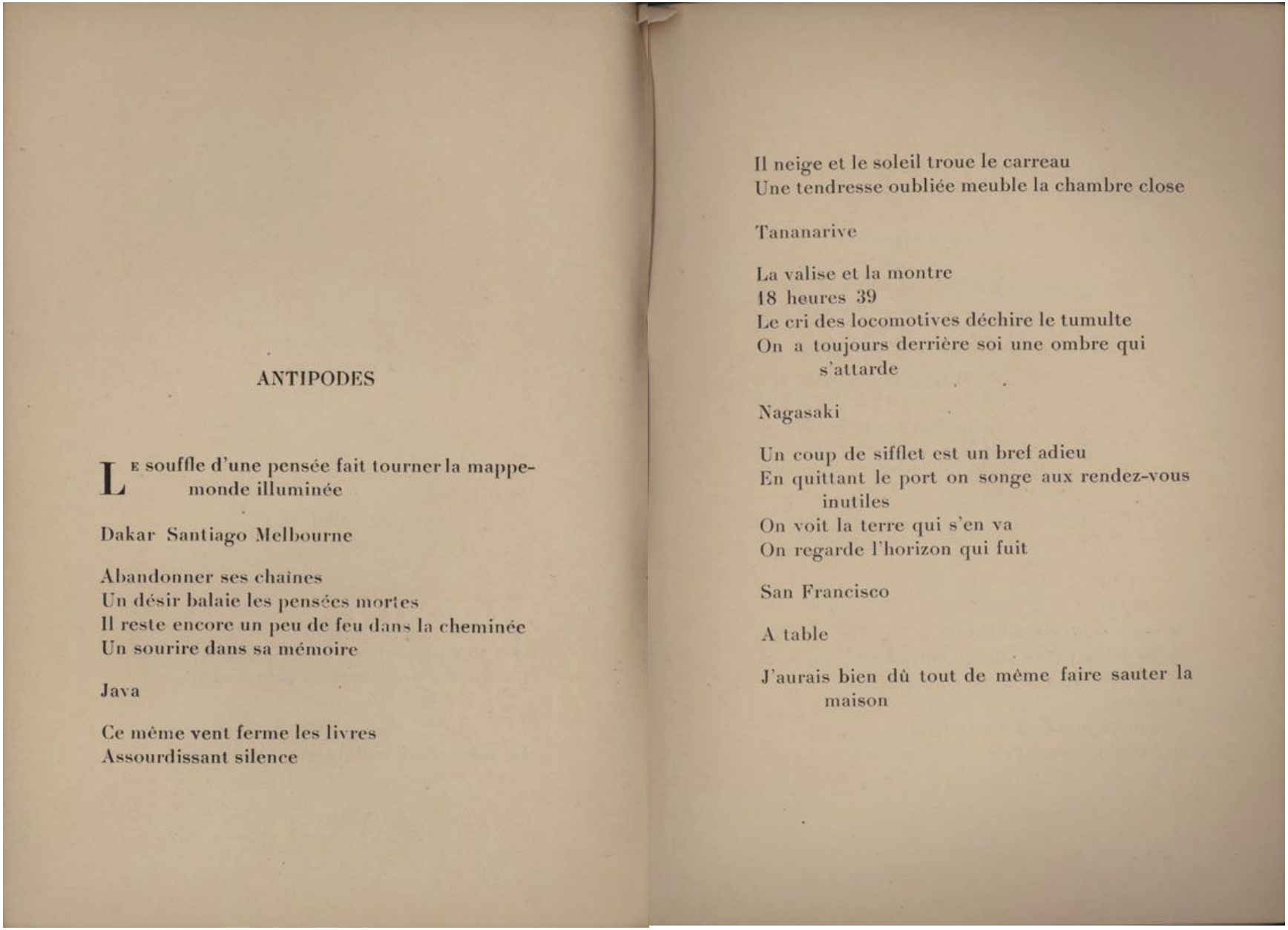
"Antipodes"

This poem is a part of Soupault's book *Rose des vents*, or, as it is usually translated, *Compass Card*, though it also could mean "compass rose," "fantail," "rosewind," or "rose of wind." A compass card is a type of compass where the face freely rotates within the case. The title of the poem itself can also have many different interpretations. First off is the actual definition: if you took a geographical location and drew an imaginary line through the direct center of the earth to the other side, the second location would be the first's antipode, and the two

would be antipodes or an antipodal pair. The second interpretation is the importance of the root Anti- in much of the Dada movement not just to denote opposites, but to denote conflicting similarity and difference at the same time. The term "Anti-art", as discussed earlier, is not the opposite of art, but it contains both similarities and differences with Art, and the two inform one another. This also relates to the concept of Antipodes: these locations can share some similarities, are also very different from one another, but are intrinsically connected by being the furthest away from each other as possible on the Earth.

This poem and indeed this book of poetry was written just before the advent of surrealism, and it seems to share a few of the hallmarks of that movement. It almost seems like automatic writing, but it serves a revolt purpose in that it breaks down the boundaries of poetry by the addition of city names as part of the poem. It also almost has a romantic feeling to it, a tiny bit of nostalgia. However, it captures the nihilism that was the hallmark of Paris Dada that Picabia brought them.

This specific poem by Soupault was chosen because it reveals his reasons for leaving Dada behind, as he soon afterwards founded the Surrealist movement. Soupault acknowledges he had to give up feelings to conform to their nihilism, and thinks that going back to emotion is futile in "Antipodes". However, one could see in his works of Surrealism, he does indeed go back to using emotions as themes. Figure 14 is a copy of the original poem taken from its original publication.



ANTIPODES

Le souffle d'une pensée fait tourner la mappe-monde illuminée

Dakar Santiago Melbourne

Abandonner ses chaînes
Un désir balaie les pensées mortes
Il reste encore un peu de feu dans la cheminée
Un sourire dans sa mémoire

Java

Ce même vent ferme les livres
Assourdissant silence

Il neige et le soleil troue le carreau
Une tendresse oubliée meuble la chambre close

Tananarive

La valise et la montre
18 heures 39
Le cri des locomotives déchire le tumulte
On a toujours derrière soi une ombre qui s'attarde

Nagasaki

Un coup de sifflet est un bref adieu
En quittant le port on songe aux rendez-vous inutiles
On voit la terre qui s'en va
On regarde l'horizon qui fuit

San Francisco

A table

J'aurais bien dû tout de même faire sauter la maison

Figure 14. Antipodes (Soupault, 1920)

Literal Translation

Antipodes
The breath of a thought turns the illuminated globe

Dakar Santiago Melbourne

Abandon these chains
A desire sweeps the dead thoughts
There still remains a little of the fire in the chimney
a smile in his memory

Java

This same wind closes the books
Deafening silence
It snows and the sun burns holes in the tile
A forgotten tenderness furnishes the closed room

Tananarive

The suitcase and the watch
6:39pm
The cry of trains rips the commotion
One always has behind oneself a shadow who lingers

Nagasaki

A whistleblow is a brief farewell
While leaving the port one dreams of useless rendez-vous
One sees the Earth which goes
One watches the horizon which flees

San Francisco

At the table

I would have all the same blown up the house.

Observations and Analysis

The format in this book seems to be that poems start low on the page and then go on to the next page. The title is all in caps, as is custom with French titles, but the rest of the poem is capitalized normally. It was set in a serif font, or a font with widened edges on the tops and bottoms of each letter, such as seen in Times New Roman or Garamond. There is an initial, or oversized first letter, but a quick glance at the rest of the publication reveals that every work begins with one, so the use of initials is a stylistic choice of the publisher rather than Soupault.

As discussed about the title of the poem, antipodes are opposite poles of Earth. Therefore this poem is about travel and ones left behind. It also includes a nihilistic aspect, especially when he says that "on songe aux rendez-vous inutiles (one dreams of useless rendez-vous). This shows that even though he seems to miss this person he's left behind, he knows that any reunion would be unnecessary. This could be because his missed one has changed, or he himself has changed so much that a reunion would be wasted due to now-conflicting personalities, or that the connection has been lost, broken by travel. He and his friend are now antipodes: they have their shared past, but their present differences so dwarf their old relationship that their current connection is tenuous at best. They've moved too far apart. Therefore any translation must be sure to preserve the sad, almost feeling-like tone inherent in this poem.

Another important theme that crops up a few times in this poem is the symbol of the wind caused by the single thought. It turns the map, it sweeps away the dead thoughts, and it closes books. It may even blow the whistle and blow up the house. This imagery is important in that it ties the poem together and it provokes a further sense of movement. All these themes are represented upon the following preservation list.

Antipodes Preservation List

6. Imagery- the breeze of thought; antipodes; travel
7. Tone- Sad to nihilistic gradient
8. Cultural Allusions- War-torn Europe, multiculturalness
9. Meter- Short, staccato lines without form
10. Other- Internal change

Edited Version

ANTIPODES

A thought's breath spins the globe

Dakar Santiago Melbourne

Abandon these shackles
A single desire blows away dead ideas
There is still a little fire in the chimney
A smile in your memory

Java

The same breeze shuts the books
Deafening silence

It's snowing and the sun bores holes in
the floor
A forgotten tenderness furnishes the
locked room

Antananarivo

The suitcase and the watch
6:39pm
The trains' cries rip through the cacophony
There's always a lingering shadow behind
you

Nagasaki

A blow of a whistle is a brief goodbye
While leaving the port you dream of
pointless reunions
You see the Earth retreat
You watch the horizon flee

San Francisco

At the table
All the same, I would have blown up home.

Figure 15. Antipodes Translation

A few liberties were taken in this translation, shown in Figure 15, in order to honor the preservation list. Firstly, “la mappe-monde illuminée” was changed to “globe” because, thought it lacks the imagery of the original, the French would understand this to mean an illuminated globe, like ones found in planetariums. English has no word with the same imagery, so “globe” was chosen because all would understand and associate it with the travel theme of this poem.

Another liberty taken in order to preserve the imagery of the poem was with the breeze. The word “sweep” was changed to “blow” in order to keep the windy imagery, since English speakers usually associate the word “sweep” with brooms except in the phrase “swept away”. The phrase “whistle blow” was changed to “blow of the whistle” to keep the wind in place, though the latter is less used in English. Lastly with the wind imagery, despite the fact that “faire sauter” literally means to explode something and has nothing to do with wind, the English term “blow up” connected the wind even further to the poem without sacrificing meaning. While this is quite a liberty, if French had a phrase like this, Soupault would not have hesitated to use it.

In order to preserve the informal universal nature of this poem, “*on*” was translated as “you” instead of its more correct translation of “one”, since our use of impersonal “you” seems to mirror the French use of “*on*” more than our overly-formal “one”. Soupault is referring to himself in this poem, but his use of “*on*” is attempting universality. Also, “*Tananarive*” is now Antananarivo, since the city (capital of Madagascar) changed its name recently.

“*La maison*” fits closer to “home” rather than its English equivalent “house”, because the French word connotes a nourishing, familiar environment that our “house” does not capture. To us, a house is just a building, and a home a place of happiness or at least familiarity. By blowing home up, then, Soupault is destroying all emotion and leading us to French Dada nihilism.

Chapter 5: Éluard's "Imbécile habitant"

Paul Éluard's life of lonely optimism

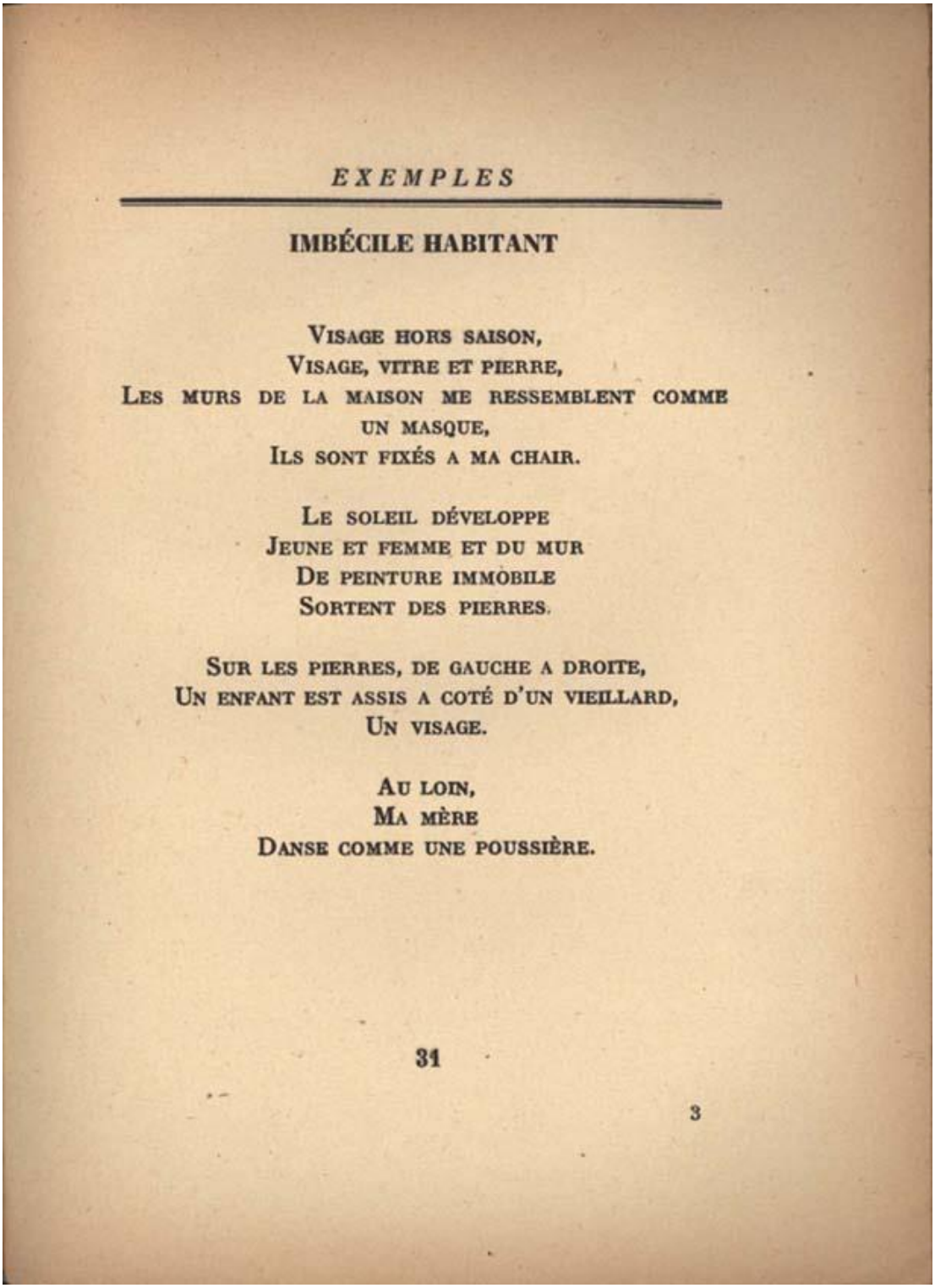
The oldest of the French Dada group, Paul Éluard was born in 1895 into a family of working class/lower middle class of a Parisian industrial suburb. According to historian Robert Nugent, this lower-class upbringing "inspired in him a tenderness, a concern for human happiness, a quest for an answer to loneliness that inform his poetry" (Nugent, 1974. p. 18). He started out writing love poetry for his lover and later his wife Gala in 1912. He entered the army in World War I two years later. 1917 saw the start of the international Dada movement and the publishing of both *Dada No. 1* in Zurich and 391 in Barcelona with Picabia and also the rise to power of the Bolsheviks in Russia.

Of this early life, Nugent says that Éluard's major themes were loneliness, "love and the human condition" (Nugent, 1974. p. 16). However, his poetry also shows quite a bit of optimism as "an affirmation of life because of this change and the challenge to deal with solitude", the change being that of the "growing aspect of life, that life is a continual struggle to become more alive" (Nugent, 1974). Nugent also argues that Éluard's poetry is generally personal rather than public, but that it "still offers the reader not only a criticism of life, but also an answer to the constantly vexing dilemma of man's mortality and freedom" (Nugent, 1974, p. 18).

Therefore we see Éluard's general themes during this time were loneliness, love, the human condition, and optimism. Also important in Éluard's works are the social upheaval along with World War I and the revolt style of the Dadaists (Nugent, 1974. p. 24).

“Imbécile habitant ”

Written in 1921, three years into the Dada movement and two years before Éluard abandons it (1923), his book Les nécessités de la vie et les conséquences des rêves (The Necessities of Life and the Consequences of Dreams) contains both passages of poems and passages of prose. I chose his poem “Imbécile habitant” (Foolish Inhabitant) because it includes allusions to the newly-popularized technology of photography and because it seemed opaque in its themes. Figure 16 shows the poem in its original publication.



EXEMPLES

IMBÉCILE HABITANT

VISAGE HORS SAISON,
VISAGE, VITRE ET PIERRE,
LES MURS DE LA MAISON ME RESSEMBLENT COMME
UN MASQUE,
ILS SONT FIXÉS A MA CHAIR.

LE SOLEIL DÉVELOPPE
JEUNE ET FEMME ET DU MUR
DE PEINTURE IMMOBILE
SORTENT DES PIERRES.

SUR LES PIERRES, DE GAUCHE A DROITE,
UN ENFANT EST ASSIS A COTÉ D'UN VIEILLARD,
UN VISAGE.

AU LOIN,
MA MÈRE
DANSE COMME UNE POUSSIÈRE.

31

3

Figure 16. Inbécile habitant (Eluard, 1921)

Literal Translation

Foolish Inhabitant

Face without season
face, window and rock,
the walls of the house look to me as a mask,
they are affixed to my flesh.

The sun develops
youth and girl and some wall
of the immobile painting
leave the rocks.

on the rocks, from left to right
a child is seated next to an old man,
a face.

far off,
my mother
dances like a speck of dust.

Observations and Analysis

The format is centered and all capital letters, with the title done in bold and a slightly larger font than the text. However, after a quick scan of the rest of the book, it seems that that is Éluard's normal format for all the poems within. The font is a serif with small caps, but that is probably the publisher's decision and not that of the author.

Solitude and an inability to connect with those around him seem to be the major themes of this poem. The most important image is that of his face being a house which he looks through to others, a wall and a boundary. This image is the most important aspect of this poem, and him as an insider looking out are reflected in the title, which could also be translated as "Imbecile Indoors" or "Dumb Dweller" or the like.

The tone is sorrowful, almost nihilistic in that the speaker feels not only separate from the world, but separate from feeling itself. Perhaps this solitude, and especially the last stanza in which his mother dances like a speck of dust, point to Éluard's mourning for his mother. That would explain his almost nihilistic sorrow and his feeling of loneliness, since morning for a loved one is wont to put humans beyond feeling. It would also explain why she is given the most characterization in this poem, rather than the other characters, the child, woman, and old man. She also receives the familiar "my" that the other people do not. In the second stanza the characters do not even warrant articles, which is unusual for French.

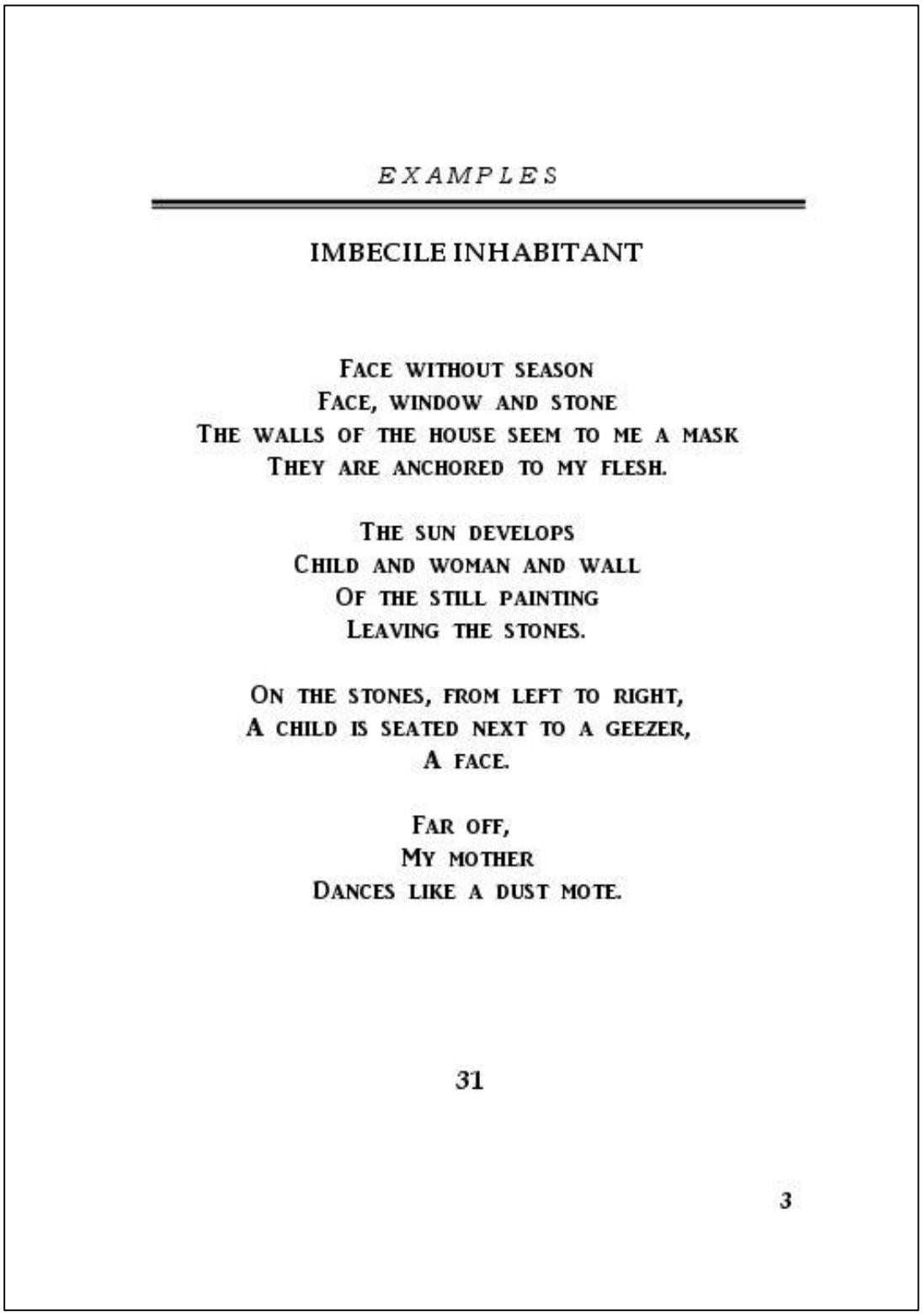
Therefore, this is a poem of morning for his mother, in which his distinct depression has forced him to put on a fake face that separates him and the world. This separation goes so far as to call the people he sees around him a "peinture immobile" which could mean stationary picture, but our closest term that does this justice is "still-life painting". However, if we notice that the "sun develops" this painting, it becomes a photograph. He is describing either an actual photograph or his view of others as a photograph.

These themes are simplified and represented on the following preservation list. This preservation list is used to further edit the poem into a final version, represented in Figure 17.

Imbécile Habitant Preservation List

1. Imagery- House as face; mother as spirit
2. Tone- Nihilistic, reserved
3. Cultural Allusions- photography
4. Meter- Short phrases with no noticeable form
5. Other- Not applicable

Edited version



EXAMPLES

IMBECILE INHABITANT

FACE WITHOUT SEASON
FACE, WINDOW AND STONE
THE WALLS OF THE HOUSE SEEM TO ME A MASK
THEY ARE ANCHORED TO MY FLESH.

THE SUN DEVELOPS
CHILD AND WOMAN AND WALL
OF THE STILL PAINTING
LEAVING THE STONES.

ON THE STONES, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT,
A CHILD IS SEATED NEXT TO A GEEZER,
A FACE.

FAR OFF,
MY MOTHER
DANCES LIKE A DUST MOTE.

31

3

Figure 17. Imbecile Inhabitant Translation

As to the specific decisions made in editing of the poem shown in Figure 17, the word "stone" fits better as a translation of "*pierre*" rather than its actual equivalent of "rock", since Éluard seems to have almost a stony expression towards the world, and the former connotes a sort of coolness and smooth texture. "*Pierre*" also could have been exchanged with "brick", since in France more houses are made of stone while in America they are more often built of bricks, and Éluard seems to be referencing the building stones of the house with these stones. However, stones are much more heavy and long-lasting than bricks, and also bricks can be associated with industrialization and the housing boom. The imagery of the child and the old man sitting on bricks was also different than them sitting on stones, since the bricks would be angular and uncomfortable unless mortared into a wall, as the stones might be, but the stones also could just be individual ones large enough to sit on.

The "still painting" phrase was left in the target text, even though he is referring to a photograph, since the former infers more mystery and imagery than the latter. Hopefully, since the sun is "developing" it, that the reader will infer this reference to photography.

The word "*vieillard*" as literally translated does not just mean old man, but a very old man. It is almost a derogatory term for an elderly man, though not nearly as derogatory as "*vieux toux*" which is equivalent to our term "old fart". "Geezer" is the closest term to the French "*vieillard*", as it keeps its elderly and slightly offensive tone.

Lastly, the word "*poussière*" is a word both with an aesthetically-pleasing timbre and with light and airy imagery. However, "speck" is overly harsh. "Dust particle" is closer, since it has a similar timbre to the original. "Dust mote" was the best option because it seems almost ethereal: it usually connotes dust wafting through the air in random patterns. This seems to mesh well with the idea that his mother is dancing through the air as a spirit after her death.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

While barely scratching the surface of Dada poetry, this study nonetheless gives a plan of translation that other scholars could evaluate and use when translating Dada poetry, whether it be Paris Dada or Dada in other languages, from other places where it has yet to be translated. It is unfortunate that more of this poetry was not translated back when the authors were alive to provide commentary and feedback on the process as William Jay Smith was able to do with Voznesenski's poetry. It is better that scholars translate as much of this poetry as possible as soon as possible; every year that goes by is another chance at losing these documents and the cultural understanding of the time.

Fortunately, the call for translated Dada poetry will come up soon, as Dada is about to celebrate its centennial in 2016. This means that other scholars will soon be digging up as much Dada work as they can to both popularize and translate. Dada's centennial will revitalize this important movement, bringing to light its impact on the art world. The Dadaists practiced free speech at a time when it was explicitly illegal in Berlin; they satirized themselves in such a way as to make art accessible for all with Duchamp's "Fountain" breaking the mold of what belongs in a gallery; they invented performance art and sound poetry that day in the Cabaret Voltaire when Hugo Ball stood before them in a cardboard cubist costume and recited nonsense poetry. The Dadaists changed the world, and they deserve recognition.

The best way to give them the recognition they deserve is by making their works more accessible to the public. The International Dada Archive at the University of Iowa is at the forefront of this movement, providing high-resolution scans of all the remaining documents of the Dada movement on their website for free to whomever wishes to review the movement, but this is not enough. Most of these works have never been translated, and remain in their original

German or French, incomprehensible to the Anglophone audience. More scholars need to translate these poems in order to make this movement accessible, so that audiences can understand the impact of Dada in the world around them.

The Dada movement deserves more historical significance in our education and popular culture. It is a foundation of postmodernism and almost all art produced today. Could Janine Antoni dip herself in a bathtub filled with lard in an art gallery if the Dadaists had not popularized performance art? Could Thomas Russell combine sculpture with interactive projections singing nonsense if Hugo Ball had not stood up in front of a room of serious artists dressed in a cardboard costume and recited “Karawane”? We owe almost all postmodern and centennial art to the Dadaists. If their work were more often translated, perhaps it would be taught more often as well. I hope that by scratching that surface of translating Dada poetry, the present study has shed some useful light on this sensational group.

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